

Wetland Vegetation Communities Monitoring in the Southern Plains Network



Importance / Issues

Wetlands play an important role in Southern Plains hydrology by storing surface water, moderating floods, improving water quality, and recharging groundwater. Furthermore, wetlands are highly productive environments that serve as habitats for many birds, fish, and other wildlife. The disruption of natural processes (e.g., climate, fire, and grazing) that help maintain ecological integrity has led to drastic changes in species composition and community structure of wetland plant communities, particularly with the invasion of exotic species. Management of wetlands is now considered among the highest management priorities for the network parks that contain them.



Riparian Corridor

Preliminary Monitoring Objective

1. Determine temporal and spatial trends in species composition and richness, abundance, structure, and diversity of wetland plant communities.
2. Quantify changes in the cover, richness, and species diversity of key woody native and non-native wetland trees within network parks.
3. Determine long-term trends in exotic plant abundance and distribution in wetland areas.

Potential Measures

Plant species composition, abundance, frequency, and cover.

Protocol Development & Status

SOPN's wetland vegetation monitoring protocol will largely be based on existing protocol used by other Networks and agencies, but will be adapted to suit the needs of wetlands in our network. Karie Cherwin is leading the wetland vegetation vital sign protocol and the planned completion date is November 2007.



Arch Wetland

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